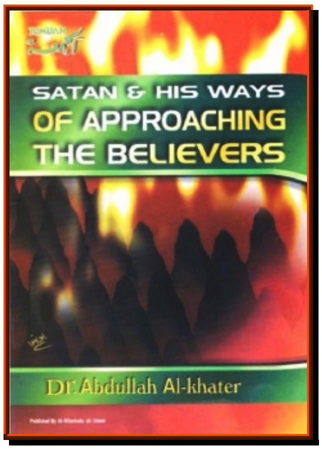
All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the Worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, may Allaah exalt his mention as well as that of his family and all his companions.

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Satan and his Ways of Approaching the Believers

By: Abdullah Al-Khater

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Satan and his Ways of Approaching the Believers

1- Satan: Substantial Nature

What is Satan? This is a fundamental question in Islamic Faith. Some believe that the word 'Satan' refers to those scruples with which one can be obsessed; others claim that it denotes the so many microorganisms living around us. Others yet hold that it symbolizes evil

In the Islamic Faith, however, Satan is a member of the jinn that constitute a world of their own, created with the ability to obscure themselves from human sight. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.' So they prostrated themselves except 'Iblis' (Satan). He was one of the jinn; he disobeyed the command of his Lord." (18: 50

We Muslims believe in the existence of the jinn, including Satan; and according to what the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam, may Allah exalt his mention) is reported to have said, every single human being does have an associate from among the jinn as well as one from among the angels. This can be inferred from the following Verses from the Holy Qur'an: "Say: 'I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the Ilah (God) of mankind, from the evil of the whisperers (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one's heart after one remembers Allah). Who whispers in the breasts of mankind. Of jinn and men." (114: 1-6)

Satan also multiplies, and thus has his own offspring. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "Will you then take him (Satan) and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you?" (18: 50)

In this way, Satan's offspring and followers are striving hard to seduce mankind and mislead them in worldly life

2- Satan: Approaching Mankind

Satan approaches mankind by stealthy degrees. His ultimate goal is to make men go astray in the sense that they eventually become disbelievers or at least polytheists. But if they prove to be stuck fast to their faith, he moves to tempt true believers into heterodoxy; that is making them innovate principles and deduce rulings that are alien to genuine Islamic doctrines. If they still resist, he tries to make them err by committing major sins. When the believers are found to be unlikely to commit major sins, Satan never gives up, and begins to adorn the way leading to those seemingly less serious sins; that is by keeping them engaged in trivial matters. Finally, when Satan's efforts come to a 'blind alley', he attempts to make lawful 'recommended' deeds appear more inviting than 'obligatory' duties

In his 'struggle' to take advantage of human weaknesses, Satan follows a step-by-step procedure against which we have been warned by Allah in the Holy Qur'an: "Eat of what Allah has provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of 'Shaitan' (Satan). Surely he is to you an open enemy." (6: 142)

The way Satan approaches his victims varies and adapts in accordance with their major interests and inclinations. He uses piety to attack the pious; scholarly disciplines to attack scholars; and ignorance to attack the ignorant

3- Ways of Approaching Mankind

Satan infuses suspicion and doubt in the hearts of Muslims, thus making them think badly of one another. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said: "Satan has lost hope of ever getting

worshipped by the righteous believers; however, he seeks to provoke them against one another

Suspicion and doubt often lead to evil thinking, especially when amplified by Satan's whispering into one's heart. 'Um Al-Mu'mineen (Mother of Believers), Safiyya Bint Hayiyy (May Allah be pleased with her) is reported to have said that one night when Allah's Messenger (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) retired to the mosque for devotion, I went to him. We talked and I wanted to go back home. He got up to escort me. We were walking side by side in the dark when two men saw us and recognized Allah's Messenger (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam)

They walked away from us as fast as they could, but Allah's Messenger (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) stopped them and said: 'Wait you two, this is Safiyya Bint Hayiyy.' The two men said: 'Glory be to Allah, O Messenger!'. He (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) added: 'Verily, Satan runs into man's body as bloodstream does, and he might have cast evil thoughts into your minds "

A man walking side by side with a woman at night; a situation that could have incurred hasty judgments. But the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) wanted to clarify the matter and remove any evil doubts that might have occurred to the two men, and so he stopped them and explained to them that he was escorting his wife home

This is a lesson that we all have to learn. We should not leave a doubtful matter unexplained so that there would be no room for facts being skewed or rumors being spread

Satan also provokes people against one another, filling them with hostile feelings. Sulayman Ibn Al-Sard (May Allah be pleased with him)

narrated: "I was sitting with the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) when we heard two men calling each other bad names. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: 'I know an invocation that, when uttered, can drive their anger away. This is to say 'I take refuge in Allah from the cursed Satan

One of Satan's strategies is to push the believer to extremes: either utter negligence or over zealousness. If he finds that his target is of the sort that looks for loopholes and excuses, he deals with him from that vantage. He strikes him with laziness and lethargy. He opens for him the door to subjective interpretations of stable rulings and commandments. He gives evil actions such pleasing names as to appeal to those who can be easily influenced. In this way, he dupes his victim, thus making him believe that forbidden things are lawful

And if he finds that his target is keen on performing his obligatory duties, he tries to convince him to strive even harder. He convinces him that what he is doing is not enough and that his ambition is to be greater. He must work harder than the others do; he should not sleep when the others do; he should not break his fast at the assigned time. If the other wash their hands and face three times when doing ablutions, he should wash them seven times, and so on and so forth

There are those who commit sins, but they perform the five daily prayers regularly. They believe that they are thus observing the greatest pillar of Islam, which is looked at first thing on the Day of Reckoning, and so there is no harm in committing some sins, hoping that these can be forgiven

There are others who say that true religion is manifested in good conduct and behavior towards others. For them it is more important to be kind to

people than to perform the obligatory duties ordained by Allah and His Messenger

It is also more important for them to have good intentions in the heart than to see them fulfilled in action

Postponing or delaying things until later is one of the ways used by Satan when he approaches his victims. He puts hindrances, or so they appear, in their way in order to make them put off their religious duties indefinitely. For example, one might say 'I will return to Allah in repentance, but when I have finished school or when I have found a job ’

When someone feels that he has reached perfection or that he is far much better than others, this is definitely a false sentiment that has been infused in him by Satan. This leads to self-admiration and vanity. The person affected usually has a patronizing look towards others. Such a person never admits that he can make mistakes

I have always noticed that this kind of person gives up learning when he makes the slightest error, especially during those sessions where the reciting of the Qur'an is taught. Instead of attending regularly in an attempt to correct the mistakes made, he absents himself altogether to avoid being exposed to embarrassment, and so he never finishes what he has already started

When Satan fails to stimulate someone's vanity, he tries to persuade him that he would rather be humble. He keeps whispering into his mind that he is not so efficient for what he is planning to do, which has only been cut for big minds. This results in self-abasement when the person affected begins to abuse and underestimate his own abilities; and so he gets convinced that he is always wrong

One of the most heinous and vicious means that Satan uses to deceive his victims is to make them doubt in what they believe in. When he finds that someone is following the Straight Path, thus abiding by Allah's commandments, he tries to make his target doubt in the validity of what he is doing. And because the majority of people are not true believers, he whispers as he wonders if they will all go to Hell

The criterion here is not the behavior adopted by the majority or the minority. Good behavior, however, is manifested in doing what is right in the sight of Allah and His Messenger, for Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "And most of mankind will not believe even if you desire it greatly." (12: 103)

Na'eem Ibn Hammad is reported to have said: "A group of Muslims can constitute one community when they sincerely show obedience to Allah. But if such a group go astray, one should hold fast to what they used to do when they were sincere; and if one is left on his own striving hard to maintain his faith, he constitutes a whole community by himself because Allah is with him

Another weapon used by Satan is that of fear. He tries to frighten the believers of being harmed by his followers and advocates. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "It is only Shaitan (Satan) that suggests to you the fear of his Auliya' [supporters and friends (polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger Muhammad]; so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers:" (3: 175)

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "Shaitan (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha' (evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins)." (2:268). Therefore, one might say to himself: 'what chance is there of finding a lawful job if I quit that (unlawful) one? But'

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "And whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (of every difficulty). And he will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine." (65: 2-3)

The same applies to those dealing in usury money; they claim that people around them are getting wealthier every day, and so they should keep up with them no matter what the means is. In this way, evil is dressed up in borrowed robes that hide its true nature

4- Factors that Make Satan's Job Easier

A- Ignorance: it is very difficult for Satan to approach those dedicated to learning

B- Lack of Faithfulness and Obedience: Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "[Iblis (Satan)] said: 'By Your Might, then I will surely mislead them all, Except Your chosen slaves amongst them (i.e. faithful, obedient, true believers of Islamic Monotheism).' " (38: 82-83)

C- Not Taking Heed of Satan's Ways

5- Remedy

When causes become known, remedy is possible

1- Faith in Allah: Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "Verily! He (Shaitan [Satan] has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord (Allah)." (16: 99)

2- Obtaining Islamic knowledge from the Right Sources

3- Taking refuge and shelter in Allah: Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaitan (Satan), then seek

refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearer, All-Knower." (7: 200). This can be done by reciting the last two chapters of the Holy Qur'an, namely Surat Al-Falaq (The Daybreak) and Surat An-Nas (mankind)